

URGENT ACTION

RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES HARRASS NGO ACTIVIST

The chairman of leading Russian human rights NGO has been threatened with criminal proceedings in connection with the NGO's work and media publications in support of victims of human rights violations by law enforcement officials in Chechnya.

Igor Kalyapin, Chairman of the Inter-Regional Committee against Torture (IRCAT), was summoned for questioning by an investigator from Yessentuki on 7 July, reportedly in relation to a number of articles he had published, or contributed to, on enforced disappearances and other human rights violations in Chechnya. According to the IRCAT, a member of the Russian intelligence service, the FSB, alleged that Igor Kalyapin had disclosed confidential information in these articles. Igor Kalyapin claims that he had revealed no secrets, but exposed the lack of effective investigation into the disappearances and other human rights violations and the lack of legal redress for their victims. Criminal proceedings against Igor Kalyapin would seriously hamper IRCAT's work on behalf of victims of human rights violations and would stifle the criticisms it makes.

This is the third attempt by the authorities to open criminal proceedings against Igor Kalyapin under the same pretext. The previous attempts failed to find any wrongdoing on his part when investigation officials looked into the relevant allegations made against him. The IRCAT is reporting growing pressure against its members from the authorities. In addition to questioning Igor Kalyapin, the investigator on the case has requested that the IRCAT provides him with detailed personal information concerning all its current and former members who have worked in Nizhni Novgorod (where IRCAT's head office is based) and Grozny (Chechnya) since May 2011.

Please write immediately in Russian or your own language:

- Expressing concern about the recurring attempts by the authorities to instigate criminal proceedings against Igor Kalyapin;
- Urging the Russian authorities to oppose any attempts by law enforcement officers or other officials to pressure human rights defenders and/or obstruct their legitimate work, including by means of instigating criminal proceedings against members of human rights NGOs;
- Urging them to respect and observe the right to freedom of expression by human rights defenders and all individuals in the Russian Federation without the fear or criminal prosecution or other pressure.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 AUGUST 2012 TO:

Head of Department for Investigation of Crimes Committed by Law Enforcement Officials

Justice Major A.V. Yesipov
Chief Investigative Directorate for SKFO
Ul. Mendeleeva, 21
Yessentuki 357600
Stavropol Region
Russian Federation
Fax +7 879 342 0610
Salutation: Dear Mr Yesipov

Chairman of Investigative Committee

Aleksandr I. Bastrykin
Tekhnicheskii pereulok, 2
Moscow 105005,
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 499 265 90 77
Salutation: Dear Mr Chairman

Deputy Prosecutor General

Ivan I. Sydoruk
Prosecutor's Office for SKFO
ul. Kozlova, d. 52/14
Piatigorsk, Stavropol Region, 357500
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 8793 97 36 94
(state "FAX" clearly)
Email: ugpskfo@rambler.ru
Salutation: Dear Deputy Prosecutor General

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Human rights organisations in Russia conduct important work, often at personal risk to their members. Amnesty International has repeatedly raised concern about harassment and intimidation they face. Over the recent years, some human rights defenders, as well as journalists and lawyers, have experienced physical assault or even been killed. In many cases, the authorities have failed to investigate effectively these attacks and bring their perpetrators to justice. For more details, see *Beaten up for speaking out: Attacks on human rights defenders in the Russian Federation* <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/038/2011/en>

The pressure and relevant risks are often the greatest for advocates of human rights in the North Caucasus. In July 2009, prominent human rights activist Natalia Estemirova was abducted near her home in Grozny, Chechen Republic, and murdered. No-one has been brought to justice for this crime. In March 2012, Amnesty International raised concern about the arrest and alleged beating and other ill-treatment of a staff member of a prominent Ingushetian human rights NGO Mashr, and pressure against the organization's other staff <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/009/2012/en>

The Inter-Regional Committee against Torture is renowned for its work in the Chechen Republic (North Caucasus) and other regions in the Russian Federation in support of victims of torture, including providing them with effective legal aid, and exposing and legally challenging ineffectiveness of official investigations of torture and other serious human rights violations. The IRCAT too, has repeatedly been in the spotlight in connection with the pressure and intimidation to which its members have been repeatedly subjected, both in Chechnya and in Nizhni Novgorod (see *Human rights defenders working in Chechnya subjected to further threats and harassment* <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/034/2011/en>). As recently as June 2012, three of its staff were summoned to a meeting with the senior political leadership of the Chechen Republic at which the Head of the Republic Ramzan Kadyrov accused them of "hating the Chechen people".

According to the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organisations of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Declaration on Human Rights Defenders), human rights defenders play an important role in promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in doing so they have the right to "study, discuss, form and hold opinions on the observance, both in law and in practice, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, through these and other appropriate means, to draw public attention to those matters", including by freely publishing and disseminating their views to others. This also includes "the right to criticise government bodies and agencies...; the right to provide legal assistance or other advice and assistance in defence of human rights". According to the same document, "[t]he State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, *de facto* or *de jure* adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration."

Name: Igor Kalyapin
Gender m/f: male

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